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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions can play a vital role in terms of stabilizing and revitalizing rural communities. Despite cyclical and structural changes in a declining rural economy, many rural residents wish to remain in their communities and maintain rural lifestyles. If rural communities are to survive, new opportunities and new skills must be created and acquired. In addition to rural development efforts of federal programs and private businesses, higher education institutions can provide public services to rural communities. Rural communities can benefit from the various roles played by different types of institutions such as research, off-campus instruction, technical assistance, or entrepreneurship training. The community school can provide a location for telecommunications and other distance learning systems. Offering college courses in rural areas can positively affect rural development. Obstacles to increasing the involvement of higher education include: (1) higher education emphasizes scholarly pursuits rather than public service; (2) academicians and politicians operate in different organizational cultures with different time frames; (3) gubernatorial requests to a university may be regarded with skepticism; and (4) information on successful programs is not widely known. The report recommends that governors use various methods to enhance the public service role for universities and colleges, with specific attention to rural areas. (KS)

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A TIME OF CHALLENGE...
A TIME FOR CHANGE:

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE RURAL WEST

WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

July 1989

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WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION
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PREFACE

WGA has been involved in examining rural economic and social dynamics for the last three years. Recent research efforts have resulted in several important WGA studies including a data analysis of 654 western counties (Distressed Western Counties: 1969-1990); a guidebook to assist state leaders in their diagnoses of the strengths and weaknesses of the rural areas within their states and of the effects of global economic conditions on those areas (Connecting Rural Economies), and a WGA pilot program to provide technical assistance to three states to develop rural strategies.

During workshops conducted in 1988 to develop the Connecting Rural Economies guidebook, WGA participants repeatedly mentioned higher education as a potential resource for information research and technical assistance to help stabilize rural communities. Although most only describe the need for involvement of colleges and universities in rural communities, some related actual success stories where higher education's involvement made a difference.

This theme was repeated when WGA began providing assistance to three pilot states to use the Connecting Rural Economies guidebook to develop state strategies for rural revitalization. All three states identified tapping higher education as one of their top priority recommendations. Unfortunately, all of the states also indicated that the present involvement of higher education fell short of their hopes.

As a result of this feedback. WGA asked the WGA Scholar-in-Residence for 1988, William Chance, to examine the track record of university public service in rural areas and assess the potential for strengthening the linkage. This WGA staff report is based on his paper The New Challenge: Higher Education and Rural Revitalization in the Western States, July 1989.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rural West is experiencing a combination of economic and social forces that are creating unparalleled change in small rural communities. The twin forces of new technologies and changing markets are causing jobs to be lost in traditional rural industries. Main street businesses are closing. While some communities have rebuilt their economies with new industries (retirement, light manufacturing, tourism) or home-grown new businesses, most have not.

Almost every western state has established programs to assist rural communities and citizens. These include assistance with capital for new businesses, technical support, infrastructure, marketing, exporting, and others, but the needs exceed state resources. To make matters even worse, the communities with the greatest needs for assistance are usually located within states with the most limited capacity to respond.

Higher education institutions of all types (land grant, community college, regional, research) have the potential for having tremendous positive effect in terms of stabilizing and revitalizing rural communities. All of the traditional functions of higher education -- instruction, research, and public service -- are needed. However, with the exception of land grant universities, some community colleges, and a small number of other notable programs, higher education has not been deeply involved in providing assistance to rural communities. This is unlikely to change unless governors, state legislators, and university and college administrators recognize the need, find incentives, and address the obstacles that impede a closer connection.

The potential of higher education to be an important resource is largely unrecognized and unfulfilled. State plans for higher education usually don't include rural public service. Mission statements of most higher education institutions don't speak to assisting rural communities. Tenure, salary, promotion and the availability of student assistants and access to equipment may depend on accomplishing what higher education tends to reward; instruction, publication in refereed journals, and basic research. Unfortunately, the higher education functions most needed in rural areas lean more toward applied research and public service which are not generally as well rewarded.

In addition to structural disincentives, the cultures of government and higher education are very different. The differences include time horizons (government timeframe is usually very short while academic is long), modes of thought (government is deductive and particular which academic is inductive and generic), and forms of expression (simple and absolute versus abstruse and qualified).

Politics both within institutions and as well as between institutions and government can hinder a positive involvement by higher education in rural issues. Finally, success stories, when they do occur, are not widely shared. Expanding the institutional involvement in rural affairs would not only help communities, it would also help administrators and faculty remain attuned to non-academic perspectives, give students greater real world experience in their field, build a broad-based constituency and support base for the institution, and give the public clear evidence of return-on-investment for taxes supporting higher education.

This report recommends that governors:

1) advocate an enhanced public service role for universities and colleges with specific attention to rural areas;

2) encourage clarification in state higher education plans that public service is an important function which should be staffed and rewarded accordingly;

3) promote recognition by higher education boards, regents, and boards of trustees of the needs of rural communities and how university/college resources could address them;

4) develop agreements with state legislators to review the appropriateness of mission statements, institutional plans, budgets and accountability, and measures for state institutions of higher education to enable them to broaden their public service role;

5) direct WGA staff to work with WICHE and other relevant organizations to examine model programs within institutions of higher education that support rural communities. Specific attention should be paid to how programs are funded, the role of non-faculty staff, how the public service role is rewarded, and the potential role of community schools in providing a local base for programs, and the other important aspects of successful programs.

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INTRODUCTION

The West is at once the most urban and the most rural region in the U.S. While a majority of the population of the West is contained within a handful of cities, the rest is scattered throughout the hundreds of small towns of the plains, mountains, deserts, and coastal areas in the region. Distance is perhaps the most common denominator in the West, even more than aridity or the presence of public lands. The sense of physical isolation that can accompany the sense of space makes rural people value their communities and the social and economic lifelines they provide.

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Historically, the cities in much of the West were established to support the rural areas. People came into the cities to get their supply and service needs filled and then left. Urban vitality depended on rural vitality. Over the years, as the percentage of the state's economy dedicated to the traditional rural industries of farming, mining, ranching, oil and gas drilling, logging, fishing, and, later, small manufacturing declined, the urban-rural economic tie became weaker (although Denver and Houston, which are just now recovering from the early 1980s drop in the price of oil, might disagree).

Today the urban-rural ties are less obvious and, perhaps not coincidentally, the health of some of the traditional rural communities is threatened as well. The nearly simultaneous slump in commodities prices in the early 1980s affected nearly all rural industries. While some of these industries have rebounded, they have done so with technology to increase output and many jobs have been eliminated in the process.

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The decline in resource-based industries occurred at the same time as a national withdrawal from a commitment to access which held that all people, urban and rural, should have access to affordable transportation, communications, and utilities.

Over the last 10 years, what used to be called "investment in community" has been relabeled "subsidy," and deregulation to achieve "economic efficiency" has affected airline, railroad, and bus service. Phone companies have been dismantled. The new rule is "whatever the market will bear" and if it won't bear it, abandon the market. This mentality has left many rural

communities in the West without bus service, without regular air service, with exorbitant freight rates to ship by rail and with more expensive bills for a simple call to a neighbor.

These combined events have driven a stake into the heart of the rural West -- but that heart beats on. Many rural residents are determined to do what they must to survive. They drive hours to get back and forth to a new job. They drive a hundred miles to get to the nearest doctor. And they may have to drive even further for major shopping. But what most don't want to do is drive away from their rural town and not come back.

Western governors recognize the desire and determination of their citizens to remain in their communities and maintain their rural lifestyles. At the same time, unending subsidies to maintain life as it was in "the good old days" aren't the answer and can't be afforded even if they were. The governors are seeking to provide the tools to rural citizens, businesses, and governments alike to enable them to create their own future. Government together with rural residents must develop a new understanding of Why rural? and How? If rural areas are to remain vital, assistance must be provided to empower rural westerners to develop as they choose.

Western governors recognize the desire and determination of their citizens to remain in their communities and maintain their rural lifestyles.

At the same time that they weigh how best to assist their rural communities and citizens, governors are also grappling with budget requests for state higher education expenditures both to help educate their citizens and conduct basic research so the state can compete more effectively in the changing world economy. Many western states have a number of rurally located colleges, some of which have tried to emulate the role of the major universities. The opportunity to direct these colleges to function as regional colleges, serving their surrounding areas, is one which governors, legislators, and state higher education boards should consider carefully.

Many western states have a number of rurally located colleges, some of which have tried to emulate the role of the major universities. The opportunity to direct these colleges to function as regional colleges, serving their surrounding areas, is one which governors, legislators, and state higher education boards should consider carefully.

The two issues -- rural well-being and higher education -- can and should be directly linked by governors. While assistance from higher education won't be a panacea, higher education institutions (land grant, two year, four year) all have resources applicable to a wide range of assistance to rural citizens, businesses, and governments that can help stabilize communities.

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Although notable programs occur in a number of western higher education institutions, by and large higher education generally can do much more to respond to the needs of rural areas. However, there are several barriers, among them the fact that current faculty hiring emphasizes scholarship over application and the current reward system within institutions -- salary, tenure, sabbatical -- doesn't emphasize or encourage public service, especially public service to rural areas.

This potential linking also has returns to offer higher education. Students will benefit from exposure to the real world and institutions will benefit from building a broader constituency. Declining enrollments are forcing many institutions to reassess their traditional missions, and public service to rural communities is an area of great potential.

This potential linking also has returns to offer higher education.

A "practical" orientation for higher education is not a new idea but rather an expansion of a uniquely American contribution to academia. The extension service and such applied schools as engineering, education, and business schools were first developed in the United States. This report outlines ways that appropriate higher education resources can be used to benefit both communities and academia.

SETTING THE SCENE

Rural Economic Changes - cyclical and structural

Many economists have indicated that the changes taking place in the traditional rural economy are structural, not just cyclical, in nature. Changes in demand brought about by new products (less demand for copper by phone companies as they switch to fiber optics), new processes (technology replacing workers) and new supplies (Green Revolution turning food importers into exporters) have dramatically affected many traditional rural industries. This is a move away from the common boom and bust cycle of the rural West.

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Nevertheless, as North Dakota Governor Sinner often remarks, the western U.S. is a storehouse of many of the nation's (and the world's) natural resources and its most productive farmland. Sooner or later, due to depletion, disruption, or drought in other regions, lower supplies will lead to higher prices which will lead people back to the West's doorstep.

Whether the changes are structural or cyclical, one thing is certain -- there will be fewer and fewer jobs in traditional rural industries. Because of the improved technology and efficiencies of production, it is taking fewer workers to produce the same levels of output. If rural communities are to survive, new opportunities and new skills must be created and acquired.

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Primarily because of limited diversity in their economies, rural areas display greater susceptibility than urban areas to boom-bust cycles and the rapid loss of critical mass. The swings are greater, and the effects of a folding industry in a rural community can reach catastrophic proportions in a short period of time. Compared to larger cities, the loss of a relatively small business can be a major event in the economy of a small town.

This is the bad news. The good news is that the reverse also applies: the development or attraction of a small business can represent a major addition to the economy of a rural community. The difference is crucial to revitalization strategies: a little money, a little technical assistance, relevant weekend business seminars, a comparatively straightforward market survey, all can count

significantly in the recovery of a small town, relatively more than in a more urban setting. A little money, a little assistance, can go a long way in a small town.

Community Well-being

The structural-cyclical debate overshadows a more important issue -- the sustained economic health and vitality of rural communities. Governors and legislators (and institutions of higher education for that matter) can affect the macro-economic issues of exchanges rates and market prices only modestly. Governors can more directly affect the well being of rural areas within their states by establishing mechanisms to provide technical, business, and community assistance to rural areas. Governors and legislators have established many programs to assist rural areas over the last four years but, unfortunately, these state programs often are constrained by limited personnel, knowledge, or funds to address the problems.

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The difficulties in strengthening rural economies include the laundry list of: a non-diversified economic base, lack of access to capital or new information, shortage of training, limited infrastructure, distance to markets -- all of which have meant not enough jobs to allow people to remain in their communities. Closely tied to these economic problems lies the larger concern of community spirit. Economic arguments for efficiency must be balanced with concerns for access, affordability, and satisfaction with life. New conceptions of what a healthy community is and how communities can reconfigure to achieve stability should be explored.

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Finally, rural communities need sustained, coordinated assistance, not narrow programs which ignore relevant aspects or cookie cutter approaches based on urban models and conducted by outsiders unfamiliar with local concerns and cultures. All the relevant players and agencies need to be involved to put together an approach that will work. A state official spoke of the need for "localized integration" -- "localized" to mean site specific and "integration" to coordinate assistance with business operations, capital, housing, health care, day care, recreation or whatever else is needed. Relationships between communities and people who can provide assistance are based on trust and on-the-ground

knowledge which is only developed over time. Local teams who know how to network with and access available resources are key. This argues for localizing the assistance function to place it closer to those in need. Higher education is ideally situated to facilitate that process.

Others Providing Assistance

Many organizations and individuals have responded and are continuing to respond to the economic and social distress being experienced by rural residents. The federal government has many programs that support rural communities and businesses and many federal agencies are currently putting special emphasis on rural. Congress is presently reviewing many federal programs with an eye toward legislation to make them more responsive to today's needs.

Many private businesses are also examining their roles vis a vis rural communities to determine how they can help and in addition they are looking at what rural citizens, businesses and communities have to offer them. Telephone companies, rural electric coops and other businesses with an obvious stake in the economic health of rural areas have been especially active.

It is not the recommendation of the authors that university and college resources supplant these valuable efforts but rather that they support them and fill in the holes where needs are greater than resources. Higher education has a special place at the table -- not directly tied to political ideology, no vested interest, a broader geographic dispersion -- that creates opportunities and an imperative for action.

On The Matter of Institutional Type

There are different types of institutions of higher learning in all of the states, they tend to emphasize different roles, and they are positioned to offer particular services in response to particular needs.[1] When it comes to rural revitalization, there is room for all. While state research universities, with their emphasis on advanced programs and basic research, may not always be the appropriate institutions to provide direct services to rural communities such as off-campus instruction, technical assistance, or entrepreneurship training, the products of their research frequently are relevant and their teaching can encompass expertise needed in rural areas. Regional institutions and community colleges may be available to accomplish these other tasks. The regional and the community colleges, however, cannot compete with the research institutions in basic research. Clearly, all are necessary.

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According to an Oregon State University faculty member, "There is a role for higher education at almost every level, and every level is needed. The agriculture constituency now is recognizing the issue as a much broader one than before -- before, these people did not want the schools to focus on rural development, since they wanted new strains of wheat, insecticides, and improvements of this order. There was no money for anything else. Now the land grants are moving in another direction. Other institutions, the state colleges and community colleges, also have a vital role. They are closer to people. Community colleges can be very helpful. But there is little in the way of coordination among the different levels of institutions."

Sometimes a bit of sorting out of roles is needed, and, for their part, institutions must be prepared to participate in state efforts to establish greater role delineation and demarkation. To accomplish this, there must first be an identification of economic and community development needs in rural areas of the state, and then the translation of these requirements into specific needs. This can be followed by the appropriate assignment of those needs to particular institutions or types of institutions and the provision of sufficient time and resources to accomplish the task.

Sometimes a bit of sorting out of roles is needed.

Coordination, Collaboration, and Regionalization

Coordination of assistance and collaboration on specific projects for rural areas by universities and colleges are essential, and there are examples where it is working. A joint project between UC Davis and CSU at San Luis Obispo is promoting basic and applied research directed to the state's dairy industry. The former institution focuses on the basic research dimension; the latter on the applied aspects.

Coordination and collaboration of assistance to rural areas by universities and colleges are essential, and there are examples where it is working.

Collaboration need not be limited to institutions of higher learning. In New Mexico a consortium composed of two universities, 23 rural school districts, and the State Department of Education links personnel into a statewide health insurance program (reducing costs to local districts), provides staff development, sponsors academic competition among the schools, and supplies funding for projects demonstrating the application of research to practice. Many of the schools are now beginning to move into the area of adult education, encouraging adults to take classes with high school students. Other partnerships, such as the Northern California Consortium for Higher Education, focus on reconciling the needs of the academic and business communities.

An example of regionalization is occurring in Minnesota. Eighteen counties in the Southwest region of Minnesota have cooperated for ten years on rural development. Through the Countryside Council, local and regional issues are debated and solutions worked out as a region. Nine post-secondary institutions cooperate within the region on economic development as well as educational matters through the Council. A single university, Southwest State University, is used by the Council and other state agencies as a regional service center housing different programs for the area.

It is possible to conceive of an approach based on echelons, with the research universities providing the basic research, courses for telecommunications and other distance learning programs, and technical assistance to the regional universities and community colleges, which, in turn, would be more directly involved in the actual delivery of services to the community.

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Community Schools

Telecommunications and other distance learning systems require locations for off-campus classrooms or other receptors. Most rural communities have a school. Consideration of the school as the site for the delivery of courses during the evenings and on weekends, or as the place to put the antenna to receive the satellite signal would broaden the uses of the facilities and work nicely with the concept of a community school.

The community school movement has been around for several years, but its realization has been uneven in most states. The original plan was to convert schools into community resources by opening them to residents of the community during the off-school hours. The ultimate effect would be increased community support for the public school during a period when fewer families had children in school and local levies were likely to encounter heavy going. Some of this is apparent in much of the literature of the subject: "The doors of a community school are open evenings and weekends -- to the entire community -- for recreation and learning, for child care, tutoring, training, and more." And, ". . . community schools have these things in common: local citizens are involved in planning and decision-making through community advisory councils; the schools are open to everyone in the community for extended hours, and emphasize lifelong learning; the K-12 curriculum is enriched through use of community resources in the classroom; educational enrichment and recreation opportunities are offered to youngsters before and after school; adults are offered numerous opportunities for social, cultural, recreational, and educational programs; and delivery of service from community agencies is coordinated to eliminate waste and duplication."[2]

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Community schools would give the higher education institutions a beachhead in each town for technical assistance without creating other mechanisms. With modern technologies the schools could have computers and modem access to information across the world. The school in the West has been the historical cultural, recreational and educational center for the small towns. It can be so again in the information age.

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In the context of rural development, the use of local schools as community resources and centers for the delivery of higher educational and other community support services is an idea that is so relevant that almost nothing more needs to be said.

Instruction: The Basic Mission

Instruction, a higher education function relevant to many rural needs, is frequently overlooked as a factor in rural development. The suggestions for linking higher education to economic development remedy usually focus on research and public service and extension services, missing the primary function that colleges and universities perform.

The provision of higher educational instruction to residents of remote areas has been a perennial problem in most states and few have resolved it.

The provision of higher educational instruction to residents of remote areas has been a perennial problem in most states and few have resolved it. The phenomenon of the "place bound student" is real to residents of small communities. One of the ironies behind much of the thinking about off-campus instruction is the implicit requirement of a critical population mass to sustain individual courses. The effect is to skew the delivery of such services to market areas in more populated centers, most often, cities; these also tend to be frequented by other institutions, courses, and programs for the same reason. The result is competition and an excessive supply in cities and a virtual lack of services in the country.

Opportunities to acquire college credits and degrees are vitally important for residents of rural areas. Unable to relocate to a larger city or a residential campus, rural residents often are denied chances for a college education. Considerable bitterness can be the understandable result when a local job requiring a college degree opens and the hiring firm must bring someone in from outside the community to fill it.

The Washington State University Northwest Action Agenda Project's researchers called for several changes, including a state focus on outcomes (students completing programs) rather than inputs (costs per student), financial aid eligibility, and rural experts in state higher education agencies. Other recommendations were directed to institutions, rural community leaders, and

education practitioners. The project report also noted, "Regions with well-educated citizens are likely to show more economic growth than areas where educational attainment is lower. Consequently, educational programs in rural areas are critical to rural economic development and should be included in economic development planning."[3]

Getting past the problem requires a new way of viewing things.

Getting past the problem requires a new way of viewing things. In the case of off-campus instruction, some have suggested that the focus should be on the degree rather than the discrete course; degree programs in the aggregate might draw the necessary enrollment minimums, whereas individual courses might not. Still others suggest that telecommunications will provide the ultimate answer, since they transcend the limitations associated with sparse rural populations.

The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) recently reported that microwave and fiber optic systems are available in thirteen of the fifteen western states that comprise its membership; satellite up-link systems exist in nine. All of the member states possess some educational television resources. As a result of its work on the subject, WICHE has formed the "Western Cooperative Educational Telecommunications" network to:

- o facilitate group purchase and development of course ware and soft ware;
- o serve as a clearinghouse for the issuance of state plans, information on available course ware, technical and curricular expertise, and other relevant information;
- o develop and maintain an on-line data base to facilitate the distribution of this information;
- o sponsor pilot projects to encourage faculty and teacher use of technology;
- o explore teacher in-service education, economic development, and interstate telecommunications policy; and

- engage in related activities.

Because of advances in telecommunications, it is now possible to conceive of an institute without walls, a network or consortium of participating institutions delivering educational services via television throughout the western region. This concept has in fact already been developed in the private sector. Many rural educational problems are regional. There is no effective way to control television signals: political boundaries cannot serve as barriers. A western regional university without walls involving states on a regional basis and offering courses and programs through telecommunications seems entirely feasible. Since there may be different needs within different subregions, the plains, mountain, and coastal states, sub-regional multi-state telecommunications arrangements also are conceivable. Policies tend to define an institution as "a place," but there is value in thinking differently, in this case in terms of a collaborative relationship among institutions -- "A Western States Open University."

It also is possible to envision an entirely new university that would award credits and degrees and buy courses from contracting institutions.

Universities participating in such a regional consortium could operate with a common understanding about which courses would be accepted for credit on their campus, and WICHE might coordinate the program. It also is possible to envision an entirely new university that would award credits and degrees and buy courses from contracting institutions.

Research -- For What?

Universities are justifiably proud of their research -- it is generally acknowledged to be the best in the world. Much of the focus of that research, however, is on basic research, the pure, academically-esteemed research that evolves from within itself and its own findings and leads to whatever results. Many of the innovations the U.S. is known for have emerged from that process. Other research is problem-oriented -- to solve a given problem within certain parameters. That too has been important. Finally, there is applied research -- taking the results of the first two and applying these to make something work better.

Much of the focus of that research, however, is on basic research.

Generally, it will be the latter two that have the most immediate and direct applicability in rural areas. Many interesting questions need careful research: what are the meaningful connections between urban and rural areas today, how can rural areas interact with each other to strengthen each area's capacities, what regulatory framework makes sense in rural areas, what approaches can compensate for the loss of traditional institutions such as a high school or hospital, what really makes a difference to keeping rural America sound?

Governors and other policy leaders may need more information to understand what is happening in rural areas. In the words of one Colorado faculty member, "Presently the leaders of most states are flying by the seat of their pants when it comes to rural development needs. They have few ways of knowing what is happening in the rural areas of their state over the long term. Longitudinal data in the form of foreclosures, changes in the tax base, main street business mix, school consolidations, etc. could provide essential indicators and form the groundwork for an expanded information base. Without such information, there is no way of knowing whether more money or more programs make a difference." Until such research is undertaken, even the best of programs providing rural assistance will be doing what one state official described as "feeling the marshmallow."

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Public Service - the Overlooked Mission

A number of colleges and universities have developed programs to provide technical assistance and applied research to rural citizens and communities. The number seems to be increasing with each visit to a campus or compendium of programs released by a national association. But while some of these programs are vibrant, effective, and expansive, well situated in the administrative chain of command, involving faculty and maintaining close relationships with state and local agencies, many are based on one faculty member's commitment sometimes within an unsupportive setting, and as a result are vulnerable, gearing up, searching for funding, and if they obtain that, the people to staff them. They may have a long way to go before they are recognized either as scholarly endeavors (required if they are to be accepted by the academic community) or relevant (essential to their acceptance in the field.) Unfortunately, there aren't many

... many [programs] are based on one faculty member's commitment within a generally unsupportive setting and as a result are vulnerable, gearing up, searching for funding, and if they obtain that, the people to staff them.

academic "incubators" to help these programs out. The odds are not great that many will make it. Other programs may offer good economic returns to the university or college but have little to do with real rural assistance.

Rural revitalization can involve at least three interrelated and overlapping dimensions: local capacity building, local economy development, and enhancement of community life. All of these needs can be addressed by higher education. The first may require technical assistance, entrepreneurship training, leadership instruction, and assistance with infrastructure planning, both physical and financial (e.g., telecommunications and capital formation assistance). The second may center on the development of local economies through assistance with such programs as incubators, downtown area improvements, technology transfer, tourism and marketing, etc. The third involves aspects of a community's quality of life and may include such features as recreation programs, touring dance and music groups, art festivals, the provision of degree opportunities, off-campus instruction, and many others.

Rural revitalization can involve at least three interrelated and overlapping dimensions: local capacity building, local economy development, and enhancement of community life. All of these needs can be addressed by services of higher education.

The specific services institutions of higher education can provide to rural communities are extensive. They include technical assistance in the form of market analyses, identification of growth trends, field surveys, business planning, worker training and retraining, basic and advanced education for degree credit, adult education, cooperative extension services, technology transfer, development models, coaching, facilitating, assistance with capital formation and attraction, distance learning, high school program support, access to data and statistics, and a virtual host of support services to encourage communities to grow from within.

It is entirely possible to conceive of a comprehensive range of services available for rural communities on a continuing basis. Colleges and universities have the capacity to provide assistance with many rural community problems.

OBSTACLES TO INCREASING THE INVOLVEMENT

A Word from the Participants

Governors and state higher education executive officers often view the role of higher education in rural community development very differently. These differences are apparent in quotes from this year's State-of-the-State addresses by governors and quotes of higher education officials taken from a recent Education Commission on the States publication.

> "Our university system can be an important ally in strengthening our rural communities."
> Governor Andrus

> "We will insist that university research demonstrate its applicability to the needs of Montana."
> Governor Stephens

> "Education at every level has an important role to play in this (rural development) proposal."
> Governor Orr

> "I am extremely uncomfortable with the economic development argument. I think it happens to be a horse we can ride right now. But I don't think we [higher education] have nearly as much to contribute to economic development as people write that we do, and I think it's very dangerous for us to promise too much..." (Gordon K. Davies, Director, Virginia Council of Higher Education)... "I, too, share your concern that we are overselling economic development, economic vitality, economic competitiveness, global competitiveness. But the national agenda is our agenda because it sells..."(Norma Foreman Glasgow, Connecticut Commissioner of Higher Education)..."This emphasis on higher education as an economic savior that will turn things around and make the flowers bloom in the desert is dangerous. The evidence does not support a high correlation between strong economic programs and economic development..."(Joseph T. Sutton, Executive Director, AL Commission on Higher Education)."[4]

Tangible and intangible impediments to a tighter association between the academic and public sectors exist. They need to be appreciated, as does the fact that there are ways to address them.

Tangible and intangible impediments to a tighter association between the academic and public sectors exist.

Different Cultures

It is an established presumption that academicians and politicians operate in different organizational cultures. While they may not speak different languages, they come close to different dialects. Their needs, time-frames, schedules, and perspectives are rarely the same. In his book, Not Well Advised, Peter Szanton summarizes the different attributes of the two in the following manner:[5]

... academicians and politicians operate in different organizational cultures. While they may not speak different languages, they come close to different dialects.

The Two Cultures

Attributes	Academic	Governmental
Ultimate Object	Respect of Academic Peers	Approval of Voters
Time Horizon	Long	Short
Focus	Internal Logic of Problem	External Logic of Setting
Mode of Thought	Inductive, generic	Deductive, Particular
Mode of Work	Solo	Collaborative
Most Valued Outcome	Original insight	Reliable solution
Mode of Expression	Abstruse, qualified	Simple, Absolute
Preferred Form of Conclusion	Multiple possibilities, depending on objective; uncertainties emphasized	One "best" solution, Objectives unspecified Uncertainties submerged
Concern for Feasibility	Small	Great
Stability of Interest	Low	High

If members of the two groups fail to think, proceed, or speak in the same way, it is because virtually every aspect of their institutional cultures are different: as professionals, they approach, observe, and attack problems differently.

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Public agencies are organized along functional lines. Higher education institutions are sectioned along academic discipline lines, a standard considerably more narrow than any that operates at the state level. One member of the Oregon State University faculty recently observed, "The world has problems; the university has departments."

"The world has problems; the university has departments."

The effects are important. It is difficult to improve on Peter Szanton's words:

> "Most faculty members are trained and accustomed to work alone or, at most, in small groups of scholars in their own discipline. But the analysis of a significant policy problem almost always requires several perspectives and a number of disciplines. . . Most faculty members are rewarded only as scholars and teachers, especially the former. The approval they seek is that of their peers, and that depends on the quality and number of their scholarly publications; the informal, nondisciplinary, and often verbal communications most useful to a governmental client do not qualify. . . Finally, the roles and powers of university administrators are quite unlike executives in business or government.
>
> "Many [governmental] officials tend to assume that a dean, provost, or president of a university speaks for his institution as a corporate executive or bureau director speaks for his. But academics know that 'universities may have presidents, but presidents don't have universities.' Academic administrators rarely deploy significant resources; the usual terms of academic employment mean that faculty members must be enticed into new commitments, and on terms satisfactory to them."[6]

Time Frames

The two systems also operate in different time frames. There seems to be an unstated attitude in government that universities have an obligation to respond immediately to calls for assistance, which by implication assumes that people there are

There seems to be an unstated attitude in government that universities have an obligation to respond immediately to calls for assistance...

sitting around like the Maytag repairman, waiting for someone to call. Most faculty in institutions of higher learning, like most people outside of them, are engaged in other things -- teaching, research, sometimes grant-funded projects. Accepting a new task usually requires completing or dropping an old one. And that usually requires time for the transition. Yet, at the very time most legislatures are considering the budget for the next fiscal period, sometimes a biennium, university department heads are making faculty assignments for the next academic year. By the time the legislative session ends in May or June, most faculty are wholly committed through the next fifteen to eighteen months.

In addition, no matter what the priorities of the institution, if students are present, faculty must be there to teach them. Class room work remains primary. That also drives a calendar based more on semesters and finals than months or days. Academic capacity to respond to public sector requests will be constrained almost by definition.

For these and other reasons, people in universities have difficulty adjusting to the demands of the political and administrative environments. A brief turnaround is close to inconceivable. Faculty do not regularly perform research on the time basis implicit in policy research. To people outside academia, the academic research time frame may seem to span geological epochs. Governmental officials view their informational needs in more immediate terms.

Faculty do not regularly perform research on the time basis implicit in policy research.

Reward Systems

Rural revitalization is not a high status field in academia and thus may be shy on prestige or rewards. Faculty members and others committed to empiricism consider it a "soft" area. Promotion, salary increases, sabbaticals, and academic tenure all depend on and emphasize the importance of research and publications in refereed journals, at least in four-year institutions. Tenure in community colleges may be less categorically tied to such criteria and may focus more on teaching than research or public service, although a few publications in academic journals never hurt. Another form of reward "discrimination" may occur with what might be called "academic currencies" -- student assistants provided, access to equipment, course loads.

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The reward system also favors "basic" over applied research in institutions of higher learning more than may be realized by those who live and work outside of them. Szanton offers this observation:

> "At present, the fact is that applied research on [governmental] problems often works directly against the interest of the faculty member when he is up for promotion. Individual faculty members may continue to indulge themselves in this kind of work, but they may also consider themselves fools for doing so. . . Faculty have listened to too many exhortations and too many statements about the goals of the university, only to find that the sole activity which is rewarded in the university is scholarly publication in certain types of recognized journals. Vigor and ingenuity in the development of applied [solutions to] problems must be clearly rewarded if a statement about the [applied] mission of a university is to have any credibility."[7]

Personnel Decisions

An administrator in one of the western state's land-grant universities offered this observation, "Universities tend not to hire people with a community service orientation, since they are not likely to contribute to an institution's research base. University presidents tend to be left-brainers and don't empathize with learning by doing. Even if they say otherwise, they don't usually see the service/learning connection. There is not a lot of intramural respect for this end of the spectrum. The whole practice side is not involved in university matters. Most faculty experiences and interactions are residential campus centered. Thus, the reward system for practioners must come from outside the university."

Our contacts showed that many, if not most, faculty providing assistance to rural areas did it in spite of the system, not because of it. They often felt isolated, unsupported, at-risk. If they were fortunate enough to obtain grants to support their work, the work was often forced to end when the grants did -- the department or institution was unable to fund it out of the general budget. Almost all said they couldn't begin doing applied work until they had gained tenure -- otherwise they never would have won tenure. A notable exception to this pattern is the

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University of Colorado Business School recreation program described later, and, of course, the cooperative extensive program which was designed to provide technical assistance.

The importance of this bias, to the degree it exists, cannot be overstated. What those with experience in the field, both academic and governmental, stressed is that people providing assistance must be brokers and facilitators, understanding how to network with a variety of resources, access various sources of information, and use even minimal available funds strategically. If the academic system hires and rewards those whose interest is theoretical or those who have a stronger interest in inhouse empire-building with grants or projects, the benefit from their efforts, even if they are "rural efforts", are not likely to accrue outside the institution.

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Politics

Gubernatorial initiatives for change may be regarded with some skepticism. In the words of a Colorado university faculty member, "What's a governor to do? Any request a governor directs to a university will be read to have political overtones and implications. He can't say he wants to accomplish an economic development program without taking into account the reactions of institutional observers. Higher education faculty are probably the most politically sensitive and highly charged group of political actors anywhere in the public sector."

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A faculty member in another Colorado institution pointed out that any request from a governor to a university stimulates instant politization: it will be treated gingerly by the faculty, usually held at arm's length and placed in a different category from other institutional commitments. It will be viewed as a political request to which it is in the institutional interest to respond, especially (and usually necessarily) if it is accompanied by additional funding support, but when the funding is depleted and the project completed, it is quickly forgotten.

Lack of Information on Successful Programs

Anything like a full mobilization of higher education's resources in the campaign for rural revitalization will be hindered

by the fact that much of what is known about the problems of rural areas and the institutional actions that will prove most effective in assisting them has been learned in the doing, and the success messages have not been widely spread. There exists no extensive body of literature on the subject, and the most knowledgeable experts tend to be people fully involved with field work. Models that can be emulated tend to be few, at least evidence of the presence of success is sparse, and their general application to other settings is limited.

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In the words of a Washington university faculty member, "There are a lot of actual examples of situations that have been turned around -- even in terms of those rural communities we felt were among the worse off. But these are rarely communities we felt were among the worse off. But these are rarely written up, and there are not many examples in the literature of what works in jobs and employment in non-metropolitan areas." A few successful programs that have been identified are discussed on the following pages.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

Rural revitalization requires coordinated public policies and integrated services spanning the educational, public health, transportation, banking, and local government sectors. Innovative conceptions of the services institutions of higher learning can provide span a wide range. There are a number of examples:

- North Dakota University's extension service provides counseling and information to rural businesses, and its Center for Technology Transfer helps small firms gain access to advanced technologies.

- In South Dakota, the Governor's Office funds and coordinates the staff of the Economic Development Programs at Black Hills State College. A representative of each institution serves on an advisory panel that meets regularly to discuss proposals. Clients are regional businesses and entrepreneurs and economic development committees in the region. Technical and management development, applied research, and business plans for small businesses are among the services provided.

- Washington State University has joined with the state Department of Agriculture to expand agricultural marketing and identify and develop alternative uses of farmland. In a similar manner, the state has authorized the University of Washington to establish a Center for International Trade in Forest Products to work jointly with the College of Forest Resources, and the Schools of Law, Business, and International Studies have joined in conducting research directed to the promotion of an important rural industry.

- Eastern Oregon State College's Rural-Based Teacher Development program provides professional development opportunities to rural educators and serves as a resource center for materials on exemplary teaching practices, research, and curricular change.

- The University of Arizona operates a program designed to expand educational opportunities in the rural Southwest by training elementary and secondary teachers to train other teachers in the use of new curricula (also an important aspect of many more urban-oriented programs such as the Bay Area and the Puget Sound Writing Programs, which train English teachers to train other teachers in writing evaluation).

- New Mexico State University has a US WEST grant to work across intramural lines and is attempting to involve cooperative extension, arts & sciences, and the business colleges in an interdisciplinary approach. The center works with communities to improve economic development, providing individual business analyses, economic base analyses community wide surveys, business help. Communities must want and seek these services.

- The Small Business Development Center at Minnesota's St. Cloud State University operates a free management assistance program intended to help rural area entrepreneurs and communities develop and assist small business with research directed to their particular needs. The emphasis is on long-term business assistance.

- Successful rural revitalization programs can be intergovernmental as well. The National Atmospheric and Space Administration established Regional Application Centers in 1967. The Western Regional Application Center (WESRAC) is located at the University of Southern California. WESRAC's purpose is to develop and implement technology transfer programs to move federal technology into the private sector. Four years ago WESRAC created a state affiliates programs to provide expanded access to NASA technology and technical assistance to small businesses. The State affiliates are located primarily in universities in fourteen of the seventeen western states. Businesses can contact the state affiliate with a technology related problem and the affiliate will help develop the parameters of the problem and then, through the WESRAC network, search databases or receive telephone technical assistance to solve the problem. Assistance can also be provided with licensing and patenting.

  During the past year, WESRAC and its State Affiliates, with the co-operation and endorsement of the Center of the New West, have developed a plan to implement a Western Region Technology Transfer Network. This plan calls for the provision of technology transfer services by WESRAC to local non-profit business assistance programs on a subsidized basis, supported by existing federal funds and private sector support to be generated in the coming months.

  The technology transfer services will be provided to small businesses through the local non-profit programs. The experience developed by WESRAC and its Affiliates has demonstrated the outstanding benefits received in the form of cost reduction, new product development, business generation, job creation and/or retention, new business formulation, etc.

Institutional programs usually center on one or another of the three categories, local capacity building, community economic development, and enhancement of community life. Two singled out for more elaborate illustration are the Eastern Oregon State College Rural Services Institute, as an example of a program directed to local capacity building, and the University of Colorado's Tourism and Recreation program, as an example of an initiative directed to the enhancement of rural community life.

Eastern Oregon State College's Rural Services Institute

Eastern Oregon State College is located in La Grande, a small community in the northeastern corner of the state. The college enrolls less than 2,000 students. Its mission statement dedicates it to serving the "educational, social, cultural, and economic needs of the sparsely populated ten eastern-most counties of Oregon through high quality programs of instruction, research, and service." These ten counties constitute 42 percent of Oregon's land (over 46,000 square miles -- sixteen states are smaller than the area represented).

Eastern's development corresponded with that of many other regional postsecondary institutions in the western states, beginning as a normal school and then evolving into a state college. In the early 1970s, enrollments at Eastern plummeted and drastic budget and staff reductions ensued. In the words of one who was present, "It was becoming increasingly clear there was no reason to continue to have a college in La Grande if it continued to do what it always had. Faculty had confused 'regional' with provincial and had no clear sense of mission." In the mid-seventies, under new leadership a stronger, different mission was articulated to clearly establish that eastern Oregon was the focus of the college in instruction, research, and service. The college then heads and agreed-to and approved statement with which to redesign and/or reprioritize its programs. Faculty, staff, students, and regional residents understand what the college's mission is.

Eastern operates on an assumption that the institutional mission is central. It is a small regional college, not a research university. It operates at the applied end of the research spectrum. The college offers a carefully selected set of undergraduate programs designed to serve its mission and provide essential balance in its curriculum. Its classes are offered on-site and in remote areas. It also provides a broad array of public services throughout its region. It is different from community colleges, which are much more narrowly circumscribed geographically by service region. As a rural-based institution, Eastern describes its primary responsibilities as serving people from four broad categories: "students from rural communities, first generation college students, students who do not have access to community colleges, and place and time bound adult learners."

The college's continuing education regional program thrust provides east Oregonians with many traditional and nontraditional instructional delivery systems utilizing the resources available within the college, the region, the State System of Higher Education, and other external bodies. This involves a network of regional centers; collaboration with other postsecondary institutions including community colleges; and a brokerage role within the region with a broad range of institutions and agencies. Attention also was devoted to finding ways of delivering non-instructional public services to small communities. The Regional Services Institute (RSI) came out of that.

The RSI at Eastern Oregon State College supports community and economic development activities in eastern Oregon and the state by making the resources of the college and the State System of Higher Education available to support a wide variety of public service projects, programs, and community activities. Faculty, students, and staff work through the institute with east Oregonians as clients, co-investigators, and/or advisors to address locally defined opportunities, problems and concerns.

People in the institute insist that the college does not have an economic development agenda; rather, it has an agenda which is based on directing resources to address locally identified needs. RSI program goals, established by legislation, are to foster cooperation, networking, and agenda definition. Efforts focus on coordinating entities who each address one piece of a problem and eliminating duplication of services by coupling local participation and leadership with agency and institutional resources.

The institute focuses on community development and programs that provide technical assistance to business and industry. The RSI combines the Community Development, Small Business Development Center, Rural Oregon Diversification (EDA University Center), Oregon Marketplace, NASA Industrial Applications Center Affiliate, and the Mine Safety and Health Training Programs under one roof -- the concept of the one-stop rural community and business assistance center. RSI program personnel and college faculty members pride themselves on and are rewarded for operating at the grass roots level. Examples of its programs include transportation studies, providing assistance to new city managers in goal setting exercises, providing computer links for reading and math in several school districts, doing housing and business marketing surveys, providing electronic linkages for libraries and mental health centers, doing import substitution studies, and developing a program of mine safety and health training.

Eastern is and will continue to play a critical role in working toward the economic recovery of the region. College faculty actively work with business and government to promote expansion of existing businesses and the building of infrastructure needed to attract new industry for diversification of the region's small economy. The RSI, in operation since 1979, has been instrumental in bringing in over $10,765,000 for community infrastructure development, small business assistance and institutional development projects to the region. Funding for RSI program activities is largely from grants and contracts matched by resources from a base budget provided by the State System of Higher Education and supplemented by Eastern Oregon State College.

In a few words, the RSI fills the gap that occurs as "many local governments in the region find they cannot afford the professional staff necessary to analyze complex development issues. Many are just beginning to prepare for economic development, and assistance in supporting the growth of existing local small business and planning infrastructure or assembling a marketing package to expand business or attract industry can be valuable. The institute works closely with government leaders to help meet their needs by conducting surveys and special studies, preparing funding application, and obtaining information from state and federal bureaucracies..."

People in the RSI consider several factors essential to its success. First, the institute is well-placed within the college. The director reports to the president. Second and because of its successes in dealing with locally identified needs, the institute has strong local support and has achieved recognition in the state capital. Third, people in the institute, who are not faculty members and thus can devote full attention to the brokering services they provide, build strong working relationships by assisting other members of the college faculty with such services as proposal writing and providing students educational capstone experiences, linking what has been learned in theory in the classroom to practical application in the government and business sectors. Some RSI projects enable faculty to hire student assistants or obtain needed equipment. Rather than operating in isolation on the periphery of the institution, RSI staff attempt to work closely with and gain the support of the college's academic core. Fourth, the efforts of the college to link the "best" expertise from other universities, government agencies and the private sector together with representatives of local groups needing assistance has improved access and helped diminish the barriers of "turf" and "ownership" that accompany development efforts. The college is also able to provide continuity of relationships and the pursuit of long term agendas to bridge political changes at federal, state, or local levels. In the end, however, relationships with the rest of the campus and external groups "depend on relationships with the senior administration." These are close and continuing.

One of the major recommendations EOSC has for governors and institutions of higher education is to foster policies that reward cooperation and networking facilitate agenda development, and design new affordable delivery mechanisms.

Eastern's RSI efforts offer a good example of a college providing public services mainly in the local capacity building category, and its relationships with the rest of the institution describe one manner in which a variety of internal and external barriers may be overcome. The University of Colorado's Tourism and Recreation Program combines providing assistance with celebration of community life, and it provides an example of a different relationship with the rest of the campus community.

The University of Colorado Rural Recreation and Tourism Development Program

The Rural Recreation and Tourism Development Program was established at the University of Colorado at Boulder in the early 1980s. According to the program's director, "the project was developed in response to requests from residents and officials of rural communities for help in improving local recreation offerings to adjust to the in-migration of urban residents with greater expectations for facilities and services, changing attitudes among current residents towards the importance of non-work activities, the broadening of local recreation interests, and the dramatic changes in the state's economic climate." More than 70 rural communities, with populations ranging between less than 1000 to 8500 have participated in the effort.

The main goals are to find ways that communities may benefit from recreation and tourism development and improve the quality of small community life (enhancing "community life satisfaction"). Program objectives include: helping rural communities meet immediate and long term recreation needs; providing practical experience for students working toward degrees in recreation management; providing work experience for local JTPA eligible youths who are hired to work in the program; finding more effective ways of implementing recreation services in rural communities; and measuring the effects of enhanced recreation services on residents' satisfaction with small community life.

Under the program, recreation directors selected through a nationwide recruitment effort are placed in participating communities during the summer months for up to three year periods. These people are college students with recreation majors or recent program graduates. Local youth recreation leaders are hired (JTPA funding) and work during the summer under the supervision of the recreation director. Specialists (artists, athletes) also are retained to conduct clinics and workshops in each community during the summer months. Each community project includes a survey to obtain information to guide the future recreation development effort, and project staff respond to requests for technical assistance (establishment of special tax districts, marketing studies, hospitality training, regional tourism planning, etc.)

The program establishes such diverse forms of recreation as cooking classes, hacky sack, soccer, art exhibits and other community festivals. It does not offer Little League baseball, football, or swimming classes -- most of which already exist. The program tries to initiate activities which will provide ongoing enrichment to the community once the assistance has ended, and tries to help the community think through all the requirements for an activity to be successful. For example, if a community wants to initiate a music festival, the program helps people think through questions such as: Are there restaurant facilities, Hotel rooms available, Enough parking space? If not, communities are encouraged to work with adjacent towns to assemble a complete package of facilities.

As a result of these efforts, new community festivals and celebrations have emerged, local support has increased, and community pride has been strengthened. Additional evidence of success is apparent in the readiness of participating communities to increase their financial support during the three-year project life, and take over full support to maintain the program thereafter.

The program is just one of the activities of the Rural Recreation and Tourism Development Program which is part of the Business School at CU. The program is directed by a member of the faculty and staffed by non-faculty employees. A sociologist and recreation major, the director has been able to successfully argue that scholarly work requires community-based research, the results of which are published in refereed journals. Essentially, he has been able to bridge the academic and service sectors within the institution and within the stipulations of the traditional faculty reward system. (As testimony to the fact that rural outreach can be successful academically as well as practically, the director was just granted tenure.)

Based on the general success of the CU program, the U S WEST Foundation has provided a substantial grant to expand the program into the Intermountain Rural Recreation Development Project Network, which consists of representatives from Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. The grant will support technical assistance, training, travel, research, and project personnel for the network, and will augment funds provided by each state.

LINKING HIGHER EDUCATION AND RURAL NEEDS

Changing the course of a ship the size of higher education isn't easy. But neither is it impossible. For one thing, the direction doesn't have to change much. For another a lot of precedent exists. Land grant universities have provided technical assistance and public service for over 100 years. So do community colleges. And so do individual faculty and programs throughout the system.

Changing the course of a ship the size of higher education isn't easy. But neither is it impossible. For one thing, the direction doesn't have to change much.

Several steps need to occur. Amplified missions and public expectations need to be enunciated clearly and effectively. Opportunities for service in ways appropriate to various departments and colleges need to be identified. Individuals who would like to provide service need to be motivated and empowered to do so. Funding, time, and recognition will have to be provided.

But change is needed on both sides. Those seeking assistance, whether governors or local residents, need to give thought to what they need, how an institution might help them, and how they will work with the providers so that the result is useful and accepted.

To begin, the importance of clear and directive mission statements cannot be overstated. They should drive choices -- of institutional goals, program objectives, faculty, funding, rewards, --in short, how an institution goes about doing what it does. The major importance of instruction and research will continue to be recognized, but so should the importance of applied research and public service.

To convey the message, governors should use their bully pulpit with the public through speeches and the media and with higher education by starting at the top and working on through the system. State higher education plans set goals and guidelines and should be reviewed. Governors should meet with their state higher education coordinating boards, trustees, regents, and other elected or appointed officials.

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The members of the governing and coordinating boards, moreover, usually are appointed by governors with the advice and

consent of the state senate. In this sense, their's is a public constituency -- they must represent the public in the governance of the institution. Too often the information flow to board members is exclusively from the institution. The state needs to convey information about public priorities and how institutions can meet them. Regular meetings and direct contacts with board members are appropriate and usually effective. Governors possess a number of levers with which they can positively alter the relationship between the institutions and the state: members of institutional and state higher education boards represent one of the more important.

Too often the information flow to board members is exclusively from the institution. The state needs to convey information about public priorities and how institutions can meet them.

Governors should also work with members of the legislature to formulate priorities for higher education and expectations for which they may be held accountable. Again, it is important to stress that change in major purposes or functions will not be the goal, but rather a shoring-up of service to put the three functions in better balance.

Governors should also work with members of the legislature to formulate priorities for higher education and expectations for which they may be held accountable.

Identifying opportunities for service will undoubtedly be a continually evolving practice. Getting started may be the difficult part. State officials complain that it is hard to determine what resources a college or university may have available -- where to go for concrete help. If this is a problem for state agencies, it is an enormous barrier for part-time and volunteer public officials serving without staff support in small towns.

Almost certainly, it will not be appropriate for all, or perhaps even most, departments to have a rural service program. On the other hand, there may be many more opportunities than previously recognized. Music, art, philosophy, archeology or history resources may have significant contributions which can enrich the lives of rural residents.

> "It is my experience that academic people that have had experience in governmental or policy positions return to academia changed people. I believe we need to provide for such experience far more systematically than we have to this time. In turn, the governmental agency or policy group that has academic people on leave should benefit from their ideas and insights." Emery Castle

The state higher education agency could help by compiling and maintaining a data file on faculty and other institutional resources. The effort could be a cooperative one with the state department of community or local affairs, since rather precise information is required. A compendium of programs is distinctly not what is wanted; rather, state and local agencies need to know who can provide needed services and how to contact them. Some have suggested that this could be a simple as a Rolodex, others have suggested an annually published directory. Storing the information on a floppy disk is another possibility.

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WGA could serve as a catalyst for identifying opportunities by working with the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and other regional organizations with responsibilities for higher education to identify individuals providing effective services in rural areas and to establish ways for them to serve as mentors to others who are interested.

In order to support those who are interested, state funded institutions can be moved to be more responsive and to modify their reward systems. Faculty appointments can stipulate regional service as part of the expected duties. This can include off campus and distance learning assignments as part of the position description (not an overtime activity). Service units can be established as direct extensions of an academic department -- thus providing the students and faculty with real-life field experience at the same time as serving the public. A specific percentage of public research funds can be dedicated to rural purposes as well as funds for laboratories, equipment and libraries which will serve the developing and changing needs of regional employers as well as the faculty interests. Sabbatical leaves and retraining/updating leaves can be specifically planned to provide regional public service which would help communities and enhance experiences for the faculty.

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Last, there is the perennial problem of money. In the words of one college administrator, "It's always a money thing. People are fighting harder and harder for less and less. If the state wants something different, it almost always has to come up with additional money. You almost have to have money coming from the governor's office. Either that, or a faculty member committed to rural development has to go out and raise the money

Last, there is the perennial problem of money.

from a foundation and make sure it has strings on it." Others advised that legislators should cut budgets and then restore funding with incentives, e.g. return the 10 percent or whatever the cut was if the department (college, program, etc.) uses it for a specified purpose or shows that it has accomplished a certain objective.

The need for additional funds to support rural revitalization may be inescapable. But there is no reason why these funds cannot carry a few strings and thus make institutions more responsive to state priorities.

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- o contractual arrangements with specific guidelines for particular services and programs between the state and the institutions;
- o statutory establishment of centers and institutes (references to particular university centers, institutes, or programs -- e.g., alcohol, drugs, coal research, mine safety, etc. exist in the statutes of every state, reflective of legislative desires to rapidly focus institutional resources on special issues of public need);
- o the use of line item appropriations for particular programs, institutional units, or services;
- o funds for mini-grants to faculty for research on rural issues;
- o faculty "Job Corps" grants for time on rural problems;
- o funding for innovative programs such as institutional "Adopt a County" relationships whereby leadership training and diagnostic and planning assistance are provided on an institution-wide basis, and many others.

The application of bidding practices and the award of contracts to institutions on this basis also is a possibility. Funding programs should be designed to ensure not only the presence of

sufficient resources, but a continued institutional presence until the job is done -- that may involve several years.

For all of the above steps to make a difference, change also needs to occur on the user side. Whether there is an obstacle of unrealistic or fuzzy expectations, suspicion of an outsider, stereotyping of the "ivory tower", or reluctance to commit the energy to ensure the product is what is needed, the customers have to do their part.

Academicians and politicians operate in different organizational cultures. It is important to recognize these differences. Effective communications require both a speaker and a listener. People in both forms of organizations should devote more time to understanding the organizational constraints of the other and devising effective bridging strategies. Collaboration through public agency-institutional partnerships is the key, and a joint, mutually supported effort is the best approach to a solution.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Governors, in speeches, news releases, and other public communications, need to press the case for rural revitalization and a close relationship between colleges and universities and the state in this cause. This may lead to a new balance among instruction, research, and public service in these institutions. The change in emphasis recognizes the growing importance of instruction and research to the nation's global competitiveness and quality of life. But it is also clear that expanding higher education's involvement in matters of public policy can keep administrators and faculty attuned to non-academic perspectives, give students greater real world experience in their fields, provide needed expertise to communities and other recipients, build a broad constituency and support base for the institution, and provide the public evidence of return-on-investment for taxes supporting higher education.

2. Although a governor's direct role in higher education may be limited, they can insist on the following:

   - clarification in state higher education plans that assistance with economic and community development, both urban and rural, is an important higher education concern and should be addressed accordingly;

   - recognition by higher education boards, regents and boards of trustees of the range of needs that can be met with higher education resources and the potential and appropriate public services which could be provided by the various institutions in the system;

   - understanding by college and university presidents and other administrators of the implications of a strengthened emphasis on public service for institutional mission statements, budgets, personnel choices, and interactions with the community;

- agreement with state legislators to review the appropriateness of mission statements, institutional plans, budgets, and accountability measures for state institutions of higher education to enable them to broaden their service role.

- WGA staff should work with WICHE and other relevant organizations to examine model programs within institutions of higher education that support rural communities. Specific attention should be paid to how programs are funded, the role of non-faculty staff, how the public service role is rewarded, and the potential role of community schools in providing a local base for programs, and the other important aspects of successful programs.

NOTES

1. The spectrum ranges from the "research institutions," usually the leading state research universities, through the "regional institutions" (state colleges and universities) to "community colleges" and more specialized institutions (e.g., area vocational institutes.)

   - o Research universities maintain extensive programs directed to basic research and advanced graduate and professional programs, stressing research, instruction, and public service, more or less in this order.
   - o Regional institutions tend to be teaching-oriented, usually offering graduate programs to the master's degree. Their research programs frequently have a strong applied research orientation.
   - o Community colleges and more specialized institutions stress teaching and community services and usually maintain little in the way of a research program.
   - o Land-grant institutions, universities sited on land granted to the states under the Morrill Act of the 1860s, usually are research universities and normally carry responsibility for the state's agriculture and extension programs.

   These are not, of course, categorical distinctions, as there is considerable blurring of the lines.

2. Oregon Department of Education,"Community Schools Mean Business;" Oregon Community Education Association, "Building Better Communities in Oregon."

3. "Barriers to Rural Adult Education, A Report of the Northwest Action Agenda Project" (WSU, September, 1986).

4. "New Issues - Roles, A Conversation With State Higher Education Executive Officers" (Denver, January, 1989) pp. 9-10.

5. Not Well Advised, Peter Szanton

6. Szanton, op. cit.

7. Szanton, op. cit.